



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Public Instruction**  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

\*\*\***NEWS RELEASE**\*\*\*

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**Burmaster applauds governor's leadership on budget**

*Statement by State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster on the signing of the state budget*

MADISON—I want to thank Gov. Jim Doyle for signing a budget for the state of Wisconsin today that prioritizes quality education and protects local property taxpayers.

The governor acted wisely in vetoing certain portions of the 2005-07 spending plan that would have resulted in immediate and devastating cuts to course offerings, programs, staff, and educational services in our schools. The budget the governor signed makes the right investments in our children and the quality of their education by ensuring that school districts have the financial resources to keep up with inflation. This budget will go a long way toward ensuring that our PK-12 education system maintains excellence and continues to meet the needs of all of our students.

I am especially pleased that the governor protected the SAGE class-size reduction program, a proven model shown to dramatically increase student achievement. Common sense suggests and research confirms that smaller class sizes promote student learning and close the achievement gap.

The single most important factor for student success is the quality of the classroom teacher. As part of my Quality Educator Initiative, I proposed Mentoring Grants for Initial Educators to ensure the training and retention of new teachers and administrators at a time when we will lose many of our best and most experienced educators to retirement. I commend the governor for keeping this important program in the budget.

Over the last 15 years, the cost of student transportation has increased dramatically. However, at the same time, state pupil transportation aid has remained stagnant. Upon recommendations from a broad based rural coalition, my Advancing Rural Wisconsin initiative contained a budget proposal to

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increase state pupil transportation aid to reflect these escalating costs. Simply put, by updating our pupil transportation funding, the governor has provided more resources for our classrooms.

The number of English-Language learners being served by our schools has doubled over the last 10 years with no increase in funding. Responding to this rapidly rising need, my budget proposed the first funding increase to bilingual-bicultural aid since 1991. Gov. Doyle deserves credit for approving a funding increase in this area.

The bottom line is that the people of Wisconsin want, and their children deserve a budget that is fiscally responsible and protects quality education. The budget signed today does exactly that.

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